

Subject

Telephone Relay Calls to/From Deaf, Hearing-Impaired or
Speech-Impaired Persons Through Michigan Relay Center

For

EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK

Also See

BT-03016; ET-03016,
03121, 23021

Identification

7/10-7/11
ET-03120
Policy

Effective

10-1-2002

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Replaces

ET-03120 (7-1-96)

7/10

Treasury personnel may use the Michigan Relay Center (MRC) to relay calls to deaf, hearing-impaired or speech-impaired persons by calling 1-800-649-3777 or 711 from a Teletypewriter (TTY), 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Likewise, Treasury personnel may receive telephone calls from deaf, hearing-impaired or speech-impaired persons through the MRC.

Release of Confidential Information

In compliance with Title II of the Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 (see Policy ET-03121), Treasury personnel handling telephone inquiries of a confidential nature from deaf, hearing-impaired or speech-impaired taxpayers via the MRC shall waive the power of attorney requirement for disclosure of confidential information to a third party representing or otherwise acting on behalf of the disabled taxpayer. Disclosure to an MRC operator is allowed on the basis that: (1) the deaf, hearing-impaired or speech-impaired taxpayer has given his or her express or implied consent for confidential information to be disclosed through MRC, and (2) there must be continual telephonic contact between the TTY caller and the person being called.

About the Michigan Relay Center

MRC is operated by SBC/Ameritech (on behalf of Michigan's 45 local telephone companies) under mandate of Title IV of ADA to enable deaf, hearing-impaired and speech-impaired people to communicate with anyone. This is how the system works:

1. The deaf, hearing-impaired or speech-impaired person calls MRC using a TTY and types message to operator.
2. Keeping the TTY line open, the operator phones the person with whom the TTY caller wishes to communicate. The operator informs the person that call is being relayed through the MRC.
3. With both TTY and phone lines open, the operator relays typed messages from the TTY caller to the person, receives oral responses from the person, and types oral responses back to the TTY caller.
4. The operator is a neutral third party to the call. Both the TTY caller and the person being called should speak directly to each other as though the operator was not there.
5. Both the TTY caller and the person being called remain on the line with the operator until the conversation is mutually terminated by both parties.

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The MRC's own confidentiality policies state that calls made through MRC are strictly confidential and must not be "edited" but relayed verbatim. The operators must not refuse to relay a call because of the legal, moral or ethical nature of the call, disclose any information from relayed calls, or keep any records of conversations.

For more information, access the MRC Web site at <http://www.michiganrelay.com/>.

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